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Long Range Plan
Mount Norquay Ski Area
Banff National Park

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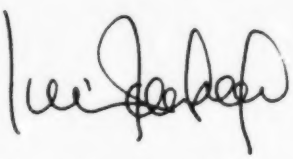
This plan outlines the decisions that will guide the future of the Mt. Norquay Ski Area. It will ensure the environmentally sound development of that area, as well as provide increased opportunities for use and contribute to the regional economy.

The proposals endorsed in this plan are a result of co-operation between the Canadian Parks Service and Banff Lifts Limited.

The comments and suggestions provided by groups and individuals, during public consultation in the fall of 1988, helped to refine the original proposals, and to ensure that the plan is consistent with the principles outlined in the National Parks Act and the Banff National Park Management Plan.

I want to thank all those who took part in the public consultation program. I remain committed to an open dialogue on the management of Banff National Park.



Lucien Bouchard, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment

Long Range Plan
Mount Norquay Ski Area, Banff National Park

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Long Range Plan
Mount Norquay Ski Area, Banff National Park

1.0 BACKGROUND

This plan specifies the land area which may be used for skiing and associated purposes and the related facilities, uses and operating procedures that are approved in principle for the Mount Norquay Ski Area by the Minister of Environment. The plan will become an Appendix to the lease for the Mount Norquay Ski Area. This plan is based on the "Plan for the Improvement and Expansion of Mount Norquay Ski Area" submitted by the ski area operators, Banff Lifts Ltd., and on the Initial Environmental Evaluation of that plan prepared by the Canadian Parks Service. Input from a public consultation program conducted in October and November 1988 is incorporated.

This plan presents area development components at a conceptual level. More detailed proposals for each aspect of its implementation will be required prior to the construction stage. Approval to proceed with implementation of any aspect of this plan will only be granted once more detailed submissions have been reviewed by the Canadian Parks Service and it has been determined through the Environmental Assessment and Review Process (EARP), that the development can be accomplished without significant impacts to park resources or other park visitor groups. The ski area operator will be responsible for undertaking environmental investigations and preparing environmental assessments, as directed by the Park Superintendent.

Prior to initiation of construction, a letter of credit will be required to ensure the project, and all associated rehabilitation, is completed in a timely manner and to a standard acceptable to the Park Superintendent. Implementation must not necessitate additional developments, beyond those foreseen in this planning process and approved in this plan.

2.0 AREA OF USE

2.1 Boundary

The area to be incorporated within the ski area boundary is outlined on Map A. Wherever possible, the boundary follows natural features, most noticeably as described here, using locally accepted nomenclature:

- The south boundary will follow the height of land along the south edge of the North American ski run, excluding all areas which can be affected by avalanches in the North American avalanche zone, to a point on the Hogsback area 50 m below the Hogsback Traverse and not including the Widowmaker ski run: then along a line 50 m below the lower (east) side of the Hogsback traverse to the southern edge of the Memorial Ski Run; then directly to the southern edge of Parking Lot #2. From there, the boundary will cross the Mount Norquay access road just below the intersection with an old abandoned road.

- The northwest boundary will follow the north edge of the Bruno Avalanche Zone (including accumulation zone track and runout zone).

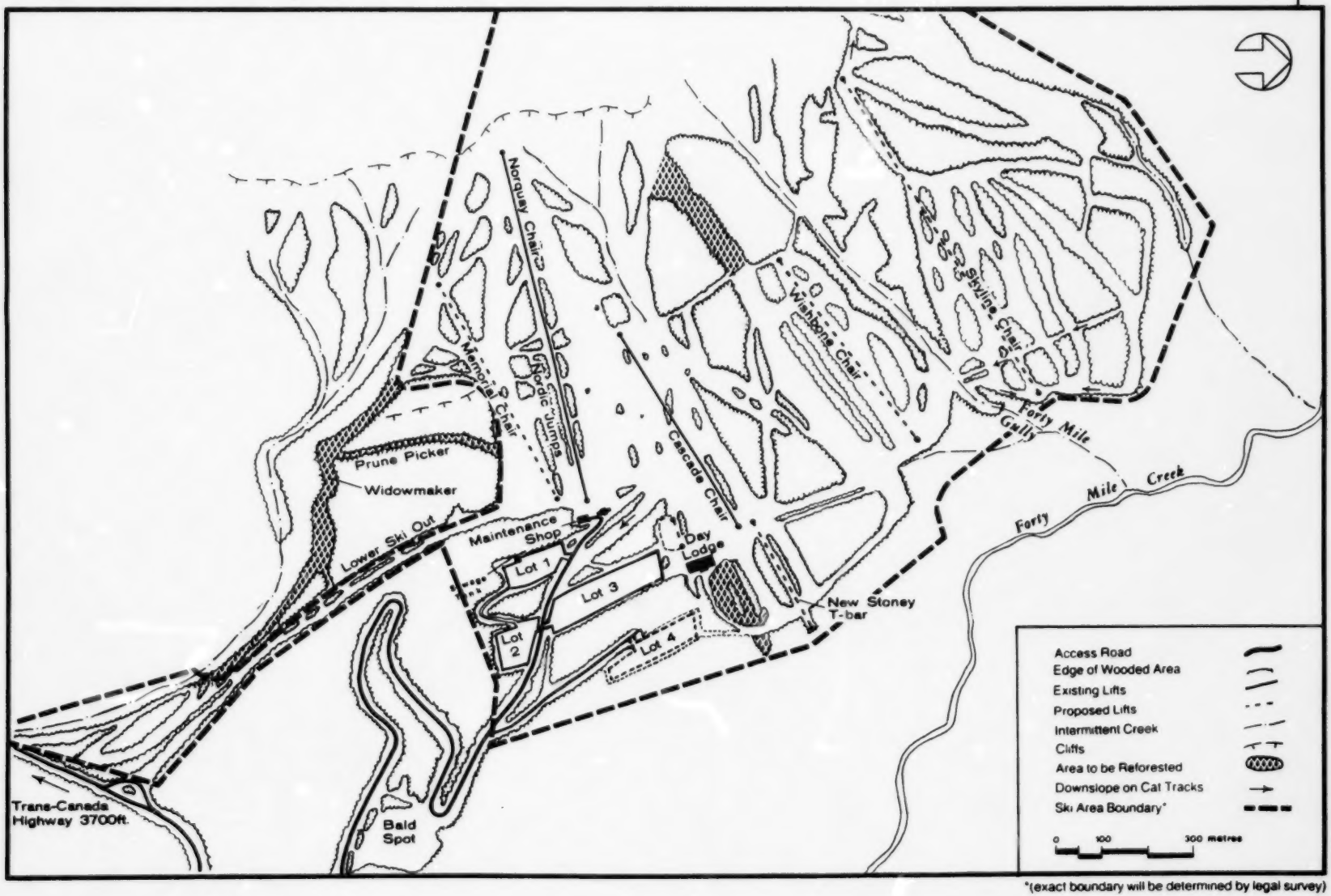
- The upper boundary will follow the height of land at the ridge crest of Mt. Norquay from a point at the north edge of the Bruno Avalanche Accumulation Zone to a point on the north edge of the North American Avalanche Accumulation Zone, and will incorporate avalanche trigger zones.

2.2 Ski-Out

The full area of the ski-out will be incorporated within the legislated ski area boundary. The boundary will follow the edge of the area which is currently cleared, and will incorporate the existing powerline. The ski-out may be used for skiing purposes and is the right of way for utilities, present and future, which will serve the ski area.

Tree and brush clearing of the power line right-of-way will be permitted to allow for skiing on the ski-out. No other ski development, including snowmaking, lifts or terrain recontouring will be permitted in this area.

Map A: Mount Norquay Ski Area



*(exact boundary will be determined by legal survey)

2.3 Skyline Ridge

This area, as shown on Map A, will be incorporated into the legislated boundary of the ski area.

2.4 Stoney Squaw and North Ridge

As part of the program to prepare a long range plan for the Mount Norquay Ski Area, the North Ridge and Stoney Squaw Mountain were examined for possible incorporation within the ski area. For a variety of reasons, both areas are inappropriate for downhill skiing purposes in a national park. Except for a limited area of Stoney Squaw Mountain which will be included within the ski area boundary (Map A) for purposes of parking lot and lodge development, the North Ridge and Stoney Squaw Mountain are specifically excluded from the ski area.

3.0 SKI TERRAIN AND LIFT SYSTEMS

3.1 Skyline Ridge

Developing the Skyline Ridge for skiing purposes is acceptable in principle. The lift alignment, and the alignment, configuration, and size of ski runs and traverses will be established at subsequent, more detailed stages of planning and assessment. Terrain modification, in accordance with established principles and guidelines for ski area development in Banff National Park, will provide for top and bottom lift terminal areas and essential traverse construction. A high traverse, as originally proposed by the operator, is not acceptable due to the steepness of terrain, exposure and visibility. Traverses at lower elevations are acceptable in principle where adequate mitigations can be implemented.

In order to avoid hazardous traverses and minimize environmental degradation, the alternative of developing short ski lifts is acceptable in principle to enable skiers to return to the day lodge area from the Skyline Ridge.

3.2 Wishbone Chair, Skyline Chair, Stoney T-Bar and a Handle T-Bar

These lifts, as generally indicated on Map A, are approved in principle. Other configurations of lifts and tows which may be identified at more detailed levels of planning, may be considered, particularly if such re-alignments will better serve visitor needs and/or result in less environmental disruption.

3.3 Memorial Chair

Approval in principle is given for the development of the Memorial Chair, contingent upon other approved support facilities being in balance with the increased hill capacity. Development of parking lot No. 4 will only be considered if the Memorial Chair is built and the operator has demonstrated a clear need for the new lot. Development of parking lot No. 4 will only occur following the expansion and formalization of existing parking areas to an acceptable maximum, and after taking full cognizance of public transit as a means to reduce the number of private vehicles at the hill.

3.4 Ski Jumps

The two existing ski jumps may continue to be used in their current configuration. Expansion of these facilities has not been considered or approved within this plan.

4.0 DAY-USE FACILITIES

4.1 New Day Lodge

Development of a new, larger day lodge in the general vicinity shown on Map A is approved in principle. The design and construction techniques used must be sensitive to the site conditions. Some site hardening (e.g. decking) may be required around the day lodge to reduce the impacts on the surrounding soils. The functions or uses permissible in the building are limited to those required to support day skiers and visitors, and to operate the ski hill. No over-night visitor accommodation will be permitted, nor contemplated within the ski area boundary. Year round use of the public services contained within the day lodge will be permitted.

Food service facilities will be restricted to the new day lodge and Cliff House. Washroom facilities in the vicinity of Skyline Ridge may be required and are acceptable in principle. A pump-out facility will be required.

4.2 Existing Day Lodge and Surrounding Area

The operator will submit a plan for the use of existing buildings and facilities. Structures to be used should be consolidated in one area and a general clean-up conducted of the existing base area. All buildings which are not required to provide for a coordinated approach to visitor services or maintenance activities will be removed and affected sites rehabilitated. Details regarding the landscaping of all new and existing facilities and abandoned sites will be a component of any submission.

4.3 Cliff House and Area

The Cliff House may continue to be operated in the winter in the current location. The natural environment around the Cliff House has suffered from heavy use over the years, and must be rehabilitated at the operator's expense. Auxiliary structures (e.g. wishing well), no longer required, will be removed. All utility lines, including sewage, to this facility must be buried. The commercial summer use of the gondola and Cliff House will be discontinued by the operator by December 31, 1990.

4.4 Parking

Expansion of the existing parking lots is approved in principle. The development of a new parking lot, Lot 4, will only be considered if conditions outlined in Section 3.3 are met.

4.5 Services and Facilities for Cross-Country Skiing

The operator will ensure safe access through the ski area for cross-country skiers. This will require the operator to undertake trail development, both on and off the leasehold at the direction of the Park Superintendent. Wherever possible, the trail for cross-country skiers will be physically separated from areas used for downhill skiing. The location and standard of trail development will be subject to approval by the Park Superintendent.

4.6 Summer Hiker Trail Use

The operator will ensure safe and convenient trail access through the leasehold area to link up with adjacent trails. As existing trails will be rendered unusable as a result of ski area improvements, this will require the operator to undertake trail development at his expense, both within and outside the lease area, in a manner acceptable to the Park Superintendent.

4.7 Services and Facilities for Horse Users

Trailhead facilities for horse riding purposes will be developed by a horse outfitter outside the ski area. The ski area operator will ensure safe and convenient access to the trailhead for the horse outfitter and his clients, and trail access for horse users through the leasehold to link with park trails. As existing horse trails will be rendered unusable as a result of ski area improvements, trail development for this purpose will be at the expense of the ski area operator, subject to the approval of the Park Superintendent.

5.0 SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

5.1 Sewage Disposal

It is crucial that sewage is treated in a manner that meets Environment Canada standards. Whether enlargement of the ski facilities occurs or not, sewage disposal at Norquay must be upgraded as the existing system is below standard.

Before any expansion of facilities is permitted, the operator will submit acceptable plans for an upgraded sewage treatment system.

5.2 Roads Within the Leasehold

The operator will submit a transportation plan indicating all roads required for construction and longer-term maintenance purposes. In principle, a summer service road to the lower Skyline Chair terminal is acceptable, however no road access will be permitted to upper lift terminals.

5.3 Service Road to New Day Lodge

A separate access road to the day lodge for servicing purposes will not be permitted. Service access will be through the expanded parking lot No. 3, and will be identified in the Transportation Plan.

5.4 Domestic Water

If required, an underground reservoir may be developed for drinking water purposes. Plans will need to meet both public health inspection standards as well as Canadian Parks Service requirements.

5.5 Power System

No new right-of-way for power access to the leasehold will be permitted as the existing system and corridor is judged adequate to accommodate the ski area expansion.

All existing power lines on the leasehold area, except for the feeder line and those incorporated into lift towers, will eventually be put underground. All changes or additions to the power distribution system on the lease will be located underground. The main feeder line will be buried in the long term.

5.6 Maintenance Facilities and Storage

The operator will submit a plan for the Superintendent's approval indicating the location of all maintenance structures and equipment and supply storage. The principles of consolidation, screening from view, and general clean-up will be followed.

5.7 Staff Accommodation

Staff accommodation for ski hill employees will continue to be provided off-site using residences occupied by Sulphur Mountain Gondola employees during the non-winter season, and other accommodation owned by the operators. The ski area operator will provide additional staff accommodation off-site, should it become necessary in the future. The operator will be responsible for obtaining land for this purpose.

6.0 SNOWMAKING AND AVALANCHE CONTROL

6.1 Snowmaking

Increased snowmaking is approved in principle. It is recognized that there will be some impact on aquatic resources, but it is anticipated that adequate mitigations will be established. The operator will undertake a study, to the satisfaction of the Park Superintendent, to establish the specific effects of the water use on Forty Mile Creek. Based on this study, the operator may be required to undertake stream enhancement or other mitigating measures.

More specifically, the ski area operator will undertake the following in a manner acceptable to the Canadian Parks Service :

- provide daily measurements of winter flows in Forty Mile Creek under current conditions;
- establish a plan and mechanism to measure daily flows in Forty Mile Creek throughout the life of the proposed snow-making season;
- identify the amount of water and the schedule of predicted withdrawal (by month) to provide for adequate snowmaking. Provide the range of scenarios which could be expected given varying winter climatic conditions;
- describe the impact on the flora and fauna of Forty Mile Creek which will or might result from water withdrawal for the snowmaking system, and identify mitigation measures to reduce the impacts;
- produce a detailed resource description of the aquatic and riparian environment of Forty Mile Creek to serve as a "benchmark" inventory; and
- establish a long-term monitoring program to measure the effects of water withdrawal to the Forty Mile Creek environment.

Access to Forty Mile Creek for snowmaking purposes will be provided by easement. Two access locations will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that they are required.

Once ski run designs are approved, the operator will submit a plan for the complete water withdrawal and snowmaking distribution system. The operator will be required to rehabilitate the existing pipeline access route and bury the existing pipeline. No roads will be permitted to gain access to Forty Mile Creek for this purpose.

6.2 Avalanche Control

Avalanche control responsibilities will be specified in the lease and an avalanche control agreement developed between Canadian Parks Service and the operator. The design of all ski runs must be sympathetic to avalanche control concerns. The cost of all avalanche control will be the responsibility of the operator.

6.3 Canadian Parks Service Building and Snow Plot

Due to changes in the ski area, the Canadian Parks Service building used for avalanche control will be relocated within the leasehold. The Canadian Parks Service will be given an easement by the lessee to use that portion of the lease required for the avalanche control facilities. The Canadian Parks Service will identify an appropriate location for the building, snow plot and storage of explosives. The Canadian Parks Service will continue to maintain a backcountry area avalanche hazard monitoring system from this location. Relocation of the building, forecasting equipment and other facilities will be at the expense of the operator.

7.0 LANDSCAPING AND REHABILITATION

7.1 Landscape Plan

As part of the more detailed site plan submission, a landscape plan will be prepared. This will indicate all structures and facilities to be removed and how these areas will be cleaned up, rehabilitated and/or landscaped.

7.2 Rehabilitation Plan

The ski area operator will prepare rehabilitation plans, acceptable to the Park Superintendent, for the rehabilitation of all ski terrain which is to be abandoned (i.e., North American run, Prune Pickers, and Stoney T-Bar). The operator will be responsible for reclamation of all such

previously disturbed areas, both within and outside the legislated boundary.

All reclamation will be completed to the satisfaction of the Park Superintendent, within two years of any abandonment. A letter of credit for the full cost of reclamation will be required from the operator at the time of abandonment.

8.0 CAPACITY

8.1 Balance

The ski area will be developed in a balanced manner to ensure the supporting infrastructure is in balance with the lift and ski terrain capacity. The design capacity of the ski area without the Memorial Chair will be approximately 2,700 skiers/day. If the Memorial Chair is developed this capacity will increase to 3,300 skiers/day. The capacity of the ski area is limited by the natural characteristics of the terrain, the limits of supporting infrastructure such as parking, and the limits required for protection of resources within a natural park.

9.0 PHASING

9.1 Scheduling and Implementation

The operator will submit a schedule to the Park Superintendent indicating when plans for approval purposes will be submitted and when each stage of construction will occur. At each stage of development, the operator will be required to provide a letter of credit, in an amount to be determined by the Superintendent, for the full value of all associated environmental rehabilitation.

9.2 Priorities

The upgrading of the sewage treatment system is an immediate priority. It must be addressed to Environment Canada standards as part of the initial development approval process, and the system must meet these standards prior to the commencement of the 1990/91 ski season.

10.0 COMMUNICATIONS

10.1 Committees

To facilitate communications with the Canadian Parks Service, the Park Superintendent will establish both a permanent Steering Committee and Operational Committee comprising officers of the Canadian Parks Service and the operator.